

1PM Discussion - RFA

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Date: Wed, 09 Feb 2022 17:57:36 +0000
Attachments: Minister McIver letter to Minister Mendicino and Minister Blair - February 5, 2022.pdf (309.47 kB)

Hi all – recirculating this ahead of the 1pm discussion with PM. Attached is the letter from alberta and below is the draft reply.

The Honourable Minister McIver
Minister of Municipal Affairs
320 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Minister:

Thank you for your correspondence of February 5, 2022, in which you requested federal assistance in relation to the demonstration occurring near the Coutts, Alberta, border crossing to the United States, where heavy vehicles are impeding the flow of traffic. This is a complex and dynamic situation that continues to impede the free movement of Albertans, and of critical goods and services. I understand that attempts by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), along with local and provincial officials, have been partially successful in persuading the participants of the demonstration to remove their vehicles and that the road is open, albeit with a reduced volume. I also understand there are alternate Ports of Entry nearby that have commercial traffic lanes and hours have been extended to help mitigate disruptions.

In recognition of these extraordinary challenges, I understand that a request has been approved for additional law enforcement resources for the RCMP under subarticle 9.3 of the Provincial Police Services Agreement. I am also aware that officials at Transport Canada and the Ministry of Transportation have been in regular contact to support compliance and enforcement.

My colleagues and I have given your request serious consideration and we have consulted key partners to assess our ability to assist you. Given the lack of commercial resources, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) would be the only Federal asset that might potentially meet this request.

Unfortunately discussions have made clear that the CAF have neither the type of assets required, nor the expertise to do this without significant risk.

Further, I understand that Alberta has the required legal authorities necessary to enforce compliance, as a highway is considered essential infrastructure, and it is unlawful to wilfully obstruct, interrupt or interfere with the construction, maintenance, use or operation of any essential infrastructure in a manner that renders the essential infrastructure dangerous, useless, inoperative or ineffective as per the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act* of Alberta. There are a number of contraventions of other applicable legislation that may also be enforced by Alberta and its police forces.

As in any Canadian community, the local police are leading the management of the situation, and operational decisions are taken by the police within the province of jurisdiction.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for the Government of Alberta's continued collaboration and understanding. The freedom to engage in lawful, peaceful assembly is a fundamental Charter right. Rest assured that as the situation unfolds, the Government of Canada's engagement and support will continue and the use of federal resources may be reconsidered at a future date once all other provincial options and capabilities have been exhausted. I would welcome an opportunity to speak with you regarding this request at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

The Honourable Bill Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Marco Mendicino
Minister of Public Safety
Government of Canada